

# Soviet Appeasement, Collective Security, and the Italo-Ethiopian war of 1935 and 1936



Historical notes on the relationship between the USSR and Italy during Italy's war against Ethiopia in 1935-1936, includes several excerpts from George Padmore's writings on the conflict.

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Apologists for the USSR have long-trumpeted Soviet Russia's altruistic and principled position defending Ethiopia's sovereign rights against Italy's colonial predations during the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935 and 1936.(1) The truth is more complex as state interests, communist ideology, and earlier Italo-Russian confrontation in Northeast Africa whipsawed Soviet policy. Japan's intrusion, real and perceived, into African affairs made Moscow's choices all-the-more critical.

Before the turn of the century, both the Russian Empire and the Italian Kingdom had struggled to increase their influence in Northeast Africa, a crucial area astride Europe's vital route to India and East Asia. Often acting with France, the tsars guided their activities in the region primarily with an eye toward Russia's larger struggle against the British Empire. On the other hand, Italy supported Britain's interests in Northeast Africa to gain London's support for its own ambition to make Libya a colony. Thus Italy's penetration of the area was primarily at London's sufferance, the British using Rome for their own, generally anti-French, purposes. Given Anglo-French competition and Franco-Russian cooperation in Africa, Russia and Italy frequently butted heads.(2)

Their most dramatic clash occurred in 1896, when the Ethiopians beat the Italians at Adwa, the first defeat of a major European army on African soil.(3) French and Russian arms aided Ethiopia's victory.(4)

Competition with John Bull had stimulated tsarist conflict with Italy in Northeast Africa, and after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and 1905, improved relations with London removed Russia's major rationale for any further African adventures. With the 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement, Great Britain

and Russia redressed the balance of power upset by Japan's decisive victory in the Pacific during that war.(5)

In 1922, after the First World War, Benito Mussolini and his Fascists came to power in Italy. Beyond the rankling memories of Adwa and the Duce's personal and political needs for imperial prestige, a myriad of other motivations went into creating and sustaining Italy's aggressive policy in Northeast Africa. Economics played a role, including Italy's need for raw materials and a place to dump its surplus population. Another purpose also loomed large.

Frequently forgotten today, but often cited in the 1930s, was Italy's supposed need to blunt Japan's commercial and military advances into Northeast Africa, advances abetted by a sense of racial solidarity between the two "colored" (yellow and black) peoples.(6) Further, throughout the summer and into the fall of 1935, and contrary to what might be expected from its history and anti-colonial rhetoric,(7) Soviet Russia used the threat of Japanese expansion to justify fascism's military preparations as legitimately defending Italy and Africa.(8) The Moscow Daily News, for example, in early 1935 editorialized that Italy had merely desired peaceful economic penetration of Ethiopia, but, "The reversion of Italian policy . . . to the old methods of direct seizure is bound up to a considerable degree with the intensification of Japanese economic and political influence in Abyssinia."(9)

Clearly, after 1933 the USSR was casting about for allies and was willing to use any bait, no matter how scurrilous or ideologically embarrassing, to hook them. Other than Great Britain, Italy was the sole power, a much weaker one to be sure, which could be brought directly to serve against the USSR's two enemies, Germany and Japan; and Britain, unlike Italy, could not be counted on for long to risk the diplomatic quicksands of East and Southeast Europe. Although the Kremlin could not suppose that Italy's navy could threaten the Japanese in the Pacific, if Rome and London could be brought to cooperate, Italy could patrol the Mediterranean, and Britain, freed from that chore, could more effectively oppose Japan in the Indian and Pacific oceans.

This diplomatic need explains the hackles raised among Comintern officials when a Japanese trade delegation visited Ethiopia in 1932 and signed a commercial treaty.(10) An American communist and editor of the Negro Worker, George Padmore, drew wide implications:

*[T]he eyes of the white world . . . are once more focused on this black empire, [because of] an alliance which might have tremendous and far-reaching importance, not only for Ethiopia, but for all Black Africa.*

*That is why European powers with African colonies are all anxiously watching the new developments between Japan, the most aggressive imperialist state in the world today, and her new African ally.(11)*

Padmore saw, on the surface, a natural racial unity between the two peoples, both "independent" and "jealous of their national freedom."(12) Based on this psychology, Japan's press had touted the new alliance and claimed that it was "in the interest of both of these colored nations to establish the closest ties against white imperialism." Padmore warned, however,

*It is to be hoped that the Ethiopians have no illusions about the Japanese imperialists, who in their internal and external policies are quite as ruthless as the white imperialist nations. The Japanese ruling class, like all other capitalists, are no respecters of race, color or creed, although it might suit their present needs to pose as the "defenders" and "champions" of the darker races. Their record, however, has been too dramatically written in the blood of millions of Koreans and Chinese for us to have any doubts about their true character.(13)*

Padmore had described the sort of penetration into its African sphere of influence that upset Rome.(14) Giving added force to Rome's distress, rumors arose that the Ethiopian emperor's nephew planned to marry a Japanese woman, perhaps even a princess.(15)

How accurate were these fears? Some "logical thinking" Ethiopians, as one self-styled patriot put it, did want the Japanese to reduce Europe's influence in their country by introducing capital and workers.(16) For its part, Japan did have some limited economic ambitions. For example, in September 1933 Tokyo asked Ethiopia to authorize the firm of Nikkei-Sha to dispatch an investigation party to search out 500,000 hectares of waste land for reclamation.(17)

Although the Japanese consistently denied that their penetration of Ethiopia was cause for alarm, and despite their protests over Italy's antagonistic stance,(18) Rome was unmoved.(19) For example, Alessandro Lessona, Under-Secretary of Colonies, commented on the worsening political situation in East Asia and charged,

*The birth rate, energy and spirit of sacrifice of the Japanese, the imperious necessity for always seeking new markets--all these combine to make Japan a very great danger for Europe. . . . The more one restrains the Japanese expansion in the East, the more she will try to expand in other sectors and in other continents, as is proved already by Japan's activity in Ethiopia.*(20)

Lessona ominously added, "To draw the Dark Continent into . . . [Japan's] orbit would . . . [deprive] Europe of the possibility of using Africa for the defense of her civilization."(21)

Meanwhile, 1933 was an important year for Moscow's relations with Rome and for its newly declared policy of collective security designed to contain both Adolf Hitler and the Japanese. In May, Italy and the USSR signed an economic accord, and in September they signed a Treaty of Neutrality, Friendship, and Nonaggression. A series of military exchanges and favorable press comment punctuated their good relations.(22) On October 27, Ambassador Vladimir Potemkin told Deputy Foreign Minister Fulvio Suvich that Germany was trying to conclude an agreement with Japan at Soviet expense. Distrusting Britain in East Asia, the Soviets wished to forge a pact among themselves, the French, Italians, and Americans to defend China against Japan.(23)

Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov consummated rapprochement in December with a visit to Rome while on his way home from his triumphant trip to the United States. There he had signed accords of mutual recognition designed, Moscow hoped, to keep an aggressive Japan in check.(24) In his talks with Litvinov, Mussolini acknowledged that Japan threatened Italy's interests by competing in the Mediterranean basin and in Ethiopia, where Tokyo had received economic, territorial, and immigration concessions. He promised to oppose Japanese aggression; East Asia, however, was not a vital interest for him.(25) Some Italians argued that Litvinov's trip to Rome signified a vast European solidarity facing Japan.(26)

The descriptions in Soviet newspapers of Italy's antagonism toward Japan suggested Italy's union of interests with the USSR.(27) Although acrimonious articles also sparked tensions,(28) mutual recriminations in truth lay on the periphery of Italo-Soviet relations. For example, in mid-May 1935, when Mussolini complained about the hostility expressed in the Soviet press regarding Italo-Ethiopian incidents, Ambassador Boris Shtein denied any official antagonism: "It is something which does not regard Russia," he said.(29)

In 1934 and 1935, then, Moscow had every reason to suppose that Italy was prepared to work in harness with the USSR not only against Japan in East Asia and Northeast Africa, but also against Germany in the Austrian and Danubian region.(30)

For Moscow, collective security in Europe was to ensnare Germany by stitching together a net that would include France and Italy and their respective allies in Eastern Europe--Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia on the one hand and Austria and Hungary on the other. Toward this end, for example, in mid-1934 Ambassador Shtein assured Rome that the USSR wanted to see Paris and Rome solve their problems as part of the Soviet rapprochement with France and the Little Entente.<sup>(31)</sup> If Moscow could bring Italy and France together, then the countries of the Little Entente would have to cooperate with Austria and Hungary. This grouping would stop Germany in its aggressive tracks by preventing Anschluss against Austria. France and Italy worked toward these goals in the Rome Accords of January 1935, and they were joined by Britain in the Stresa Agreements of April. Together with the Italo-Soviet agreement of 1933, Soviet entry into the League of Nations in 1934, and the Franco-Soviet and Czecho-Soviet pacts of May 1935, the Rome and Stresa agreements formed more bricks in the wall being raised against German expansion. And the Kremlin appreciated these pacts for that very reason. In exchange for his participation in collective security, however, Mussolini demanded and received concessions in Africa.<sup>(32)</sup>

The Soviets understood the strategic necessities driving France to buy off Italy "with Ethiopian coin," as one scholar has put it.<sup>(33)</sup> Italy was, after all, the one power which felt not only its own sense of necessity but also could act quickly and significantly against any German move on Austria. Beyond pandering to a Paris increasingly bound to Italy after Stresa, the Soviets had their own anti-German stake in Southeast Europe which, they admitted, was more important than were any revolutionary interests in Northeast Africa.

Ambassador Bernardo Attolico's reports from Moscow sympathetically explained the contradictions the Rome Accords had imposed on the Kremlin's policy. Despite Moscow's claims that only it could be impartial in conflicts between the white race and others, in February 1935 he noted that for some time the Kremlin had maintained reserve toward the brewing Italo-Ethiopian conflict. According to their verbiage, ideology, and intense interest in the conflict, Attolico continued, the Soviets should have been enjoying the struggle of a colonial people against a great power. But they were not.<sup>(34)</sup>

In truth, Moscow's inaction toward the Italo-Ethiopian imbroglio had become terribly obvious. Litvinov, as president of the Eighty-Sixth Session of the League's Council and Assembly sessions, on May 21 carefully avoided any statement condemning aggression committed by League members. He made it clear that the USSR preferred to retain Italy in the front against Germany rather than to protect the rights of small nations.<sup>(35)</sup>

Litvinov's silence outraged officials of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP). Walter White on May 22 cabled him demanding: "Why has soviet Russia through you as foreign minister and president league council remained silent Italian Ethiopian situation? Has Russia abandoned its alleged opposition imperialism and its much publicized defense weaker peoples? Does your anti-imperialism stop at black nations? Await your reply."<sup>(36)</sup>

That same day, he asked Charles H. Houston of Howard University's School of Law to picket the Soviet embassy in Washington. The NAACP then sent messages to Earl Browder, secretary general of the American Communist Party, and on May 23 to the New York branch of TASS. White urged Browder to demand that Litvinov "break his silence." To do otherwise would reveal all communist protestations against imperialism as pure hypocrisy. The NAACP told TASS that the "Negro people of America, being keenly interested in the imperialistic aggression of Italy upon the independent African kingdom of Ethiopia, naturally expected that the Soviet Union spokesman in the League of Nations would speak out against this aggression."<sup>(37)</sup>



Roy Wilkins, the NAACP's assistant secretary and editor of *The Crisis*, explained to TASS that Litvinov's reserve at Geneva destroyed any black faith in the USSR. Walter White put it more bluntly to William N. Jones, editor of the *Baltimore Afro-American* at its Philadelphia office. On July 8, he wrote Jones, who was planning to meet directly with Joseph Stalin on the Ethiopian question, that the Kremlin had sold out Ethiopia. "As a preliminary observation it appears to me that Russia is showing increasingly a tendency to dump the Negro overboard whenever Russia's interest in the Negro conflicts with Russia's interests."(38)

Blacks had much to be mad at. The communists had expelled George Padmore, the head of the International Trade Committee of Negro Workers, from the Comintern, and they had ousted him as editor of *The Black Worker*, because he had protested communist failure to aid African workers. They had abandoned their anti-colonial work in Africa, and they had soft-pedaled the Scottsboro case outside the United States after Moscow had gained American recognition. Above all, Litvinov remained silent at Geneva. The *Christian Century* explained that "communist theory has not been able to prevail in the face of the immediate political interests of the communists' state."(39) Although the *Moscow Daily News* sympathetically described the anti-Italian attitudes of America's blacks, the paper did not inform its readers of their disappointment in the USSR.(40)

In May 1935, Padmore analyzed the increasingly serious diplomatic situation. In tones different from several years before, he now thought that the Italo-Ethiopian conflict merely reflected world politics and new groupings among European powers preparing for a new world war. Germany, he wrote, was trying to break its diplomatic isolation forged by France, Britain, Soviet Russia, and the Little Entente.(41)

Padmore charged that the League Council preferred that Mussolini wage war in Africa rather than disturb the European status quo. Noting the Italo-German conflict over Austria, he charged that the League was bribing Mussolini with African territory to stand in Europe. Given a "free hand to grab as much of Ethiopia" as he could, the Pact of Rome was "the most glaring example of the united front of white Europe against black Africa."(42) Dating Mussolini's aggressive attitude toward Ethiopia to the failure of France and the USSR to get Polish support for the Eastern Locarno Pact, the Duce had correctly calculated that France would have to come to terms with him. Because of the Franco-Soviet Pact and fearing to offend Pierre Laval or antagonize Mussolini, "Litvinov dares not raise his voice in protest . . . . The League is no more than a farce."(43)

Padmore then turned to the Japanese connection. "[T]he Ethiopians and the Japanese are the only two colored nations which have ever defeated white powers at arms."(44) Charging that Italy was defending not only its rights, but also the prestige of the white race, he quoted *Affari Esteri*:

*It is time that the white nations of Europe should abandon their long suffering toleration towards the only African state which is still autonomous, and proceed to settle all questions connected with the Abyssinian problem. Abyssinia is a gander to the white race. The young Abyssinians are inspired with the idea of 'Africa for the Africans,' and are already combining with Japanese immigrants in the country to combat the white man's influences in Africa.*(45)

Padmore blamed much of Ethiopia's difficulties on its friendly relations with Japan. The Emperor realized that his country was surrounded by colonies owned by Britain, France, and Italy and these powers wished to see Ethiopia backward or even reduced to colonial status. The emperor, who had been trying to modernize his realm, was unable to get capital from white nations, because they did not want to see destroyed the myth that blacks could not govern themselves. To carry out his reforms, the Emperor gave certain preferential privileges to Japanese who not only needed markets for their textiles and other commodities, but lands where they could cultivate raw cotton--the Japanese too were seeking independence from the white powers, Britain and America, from which Japan was

buying most of its cotton lint. Britain and France, too occupied by their own problems to antagonize the Japanese, had “assigned” Mussolini the task of intervening in Ethiopia and breaking its ties with Japan.(46)

The core of Padmore's charge, that Moscow would willingly sacrifice Ethiopia if this served Soviet interests, was accurate, at least according to information from Italy's representative in Moscow. In late June, Ambassador Shtein reassured him that the USSR did not intend to interfere in Italy's plans for East Africa; Moscow only wanted that war be avoided.(47)

Giving force to Italy's new role as a defender of the status quo against Germany, Mussolini promised a “million bayonets.”(48) By the end of June, Rome and Paris had signed a pact of general military cooperation over Austria, and these good relations permitted the French army to plan for withdrawing seventeen divisions from southeast France and North Africa to reposition them above the Maginot Line.(49) All this drew favorable comment from Moscow, and the Kremlin had good reason in the first half of 1935 to hope that collective security could continue to work as in the summer of 1934, when Italy had moved its troops to the Brenner Pass and forced Germany to back down over Austria.(50)

Behind the closed doors of the League Council, Litvinov pressed hard for a peaceful settlement in Italy's favor of the brewing conflict. For example, when told that London was insisting on a Council meeting for July 29 to discuss the dispute, the commissar instructed Shtein to warn Palazzo Chigi and to suggest that Italy formally request a delay, which he would officially support. The Italians thanked Shtein for the friendly gesture.(51) In midsummer, the Japanese ambassador in Rome, Yotaro Sugimura, reported to Tokyo that Litvinov at first had intended to use the League of Nations to restrain Italy as well as Japan and Germany, but now he was hesitating to discuss the Italo-Ethiopian conflict in the League Council. The reason: the deterioration in Italo-Japanese relations.(52)

Another strong indication of the Kremlin's desire not to let increasing tensions over Ethiopia interfere with good relations with Rome was the series of economic negotiations begun in 1934 and concluded in June 1935 after hard bargaining, mutual recrimination, and expired deadlines.(53) And as Italy aggressively mobilized for war in the fall, some forty Greek freighters hauled Soviet wheat, oats, barley, coal, timber, coal tar, and petroleum for Mussolini's war machine building up in Mas'uwa and Mogadishu.(54) In consequence, a grateful Italy only informally protested the activities of the Seventh Comintern Congress of August, which itself clearly played down the onrushing war. Only Palmiro Togliatti raised the Ethiopian issue at any length, and even he carefully gave his less than ringing call to battle solely in the name of the Italian Communist Party and not the Comintern.(55)

During the summer of 1935, increasing tensions between Japan and Italy over Tokyo's support for Ethiopia further justified the Soviet Union's tilt toward Italy. For example, General Kazushige Ugaki, Governor General of Korea, spoke about the possibility of Japanese aid to Ethiopia in case of an Italo-Ethiopian war.(56) Tokyo unctuously blamed false rumors of excessive Japanese interference in Ethiopia on Soviet sources.(57)

According to Japan's representatives in Rome, in early July many Italian papers were arguing that, although Japanese interests in Ethiopia included imperialism and protection of economic interests, Japan was now interested in the conflict primarily as one between white and colored peoples. Japan, the papers continued, was the only country which could lead the colored peoples. The basis of an inhumane and tragic racial war was ripening, one which, Italy's papers warned, European countries had to prevent.(58)

The depth of the dispute between Italy and Japan occurred in mid-July 1935 with the “Sugimura Affair,” which began when Foreign Minister Kouki Hirota undermined Ambassador Sugimura's private

and public efforts to mollify Italy's attitudes toward Japan over the Ethiopian and other questions. Italy's inflamed press continued to charge that Japan was trying to start a race war and was using Africa as a bridge over which the yellow race would attack Europe. A wonderful example of the tempermentality of public diplomacy, the ultimate significance of the Sugimura Affair was that, in smoothing over this contretemps, Rome and Tokyo built the foundation for their later alliance.(59)

For the moment, however, Italo-Japanese tensions continued well into August and September. For example, Japan's acting minister to the League of Nations insisted that an Italo-Ethiopian war would mean a conflict between the white and black races, although, he added, war could be prevented.(60) With great hopes for assistance and to grand public fanfare, an Ethiopian representative visited Japan. Many Japanese nationalists asserted that a racial unity bonded Japan with Ethiopia. Although these were mostly private citizens who embarrassed the government, their blandishments lent credence to Italy's racial alarm.(61)

So did Japan's newspapers. The Kokumin of July 25, 1935 editorialized that Italy, guided by racial prejudices toward Ethiopia, had even criticized Japan from that warped racial viewpoint. The paper added that even if they settled the immediate issue, the racial problem would remain and Italy was responsible. The Nichi Nichi added that Italy's attempt to wrap the Ethiopian issue in racial cloth would fail.(62) The Houchi on August 7 wrote that Italy intended to make Ethiopia its protectorate--the imperialism and sense of racial superiority common among whites had led Italy to take such an ambitious policy. The paper concluded that Japanese had to make the white race see its injustice and errors. That same day, the Osaka Asahi wrote that the Italo-Ethiopian dispute had aroused the colored peoples against Italy and whites. If racial reconciliation proved difficult, Mussolini, Italian papers, and their use of the "yellow peril" would have to bear the consequences.(63)

Increasing the stakes involved from the Kremlin's vantage, Austria's Nazis strongly supported Ethiopia. They believed that the moment Italy began hostilities, Germany would reopen its campaign against the government in Vienna.(64) In response, on August 24, Mussolini took personal charge of military maneuvers along Italy's Alpine frontier to reemphasize that he was prepared to do his duty in preserving Europe's peace. Paris continued to conclude that some latitude in Africa was a small price to pay for keeping Italy on the Brenner, ready to move against the Nazis in Austria.(65)

So did the Kremlin. For example, Ambassador Shtein again begged that Rome would take into account "the most difficult position of Litvinov, who wants to do all possible to help Italy."(66) The greatest problem was Italy's declaration to take Ethiopia at any cost. If Italy could have carried off its aggression without calling it "aggression," Moscow would have been content, and a cooperative rather than a defiant Mussolini could have won from the League all concessions of practical importance he wanted. Shtein made clear the Kremlin's belief that the League's position depended on a self-serving Britain determined to make problems for Italy.(67)

Britain did fear Italy's pressure on its own imperial holdings, and London dismissed Italy's ability to counter the Hitlerite threat in any case. The Stresa Front, with its implicit Soviet connection, thus collapsed within a few months, partly because Britain concluded the Anglo-German Naval Agreement in June behind the backs of its Stresa partners and ultimately because London insisted on League-imposed economic sanctions to punish Italy for invading Ethiopia.(68)

Was Italy or Britain in the end more useful to Moscow in opposing Germany and Japan? The Soviets had to ask the question, especially after the breakdown on August 14 of the Anglo-Franco-Italian talks on Ethiopia.(69) The answer was obvious, and London sucked not only Paris, but Moscow as well, into the vortex of anti-Italian League action.

Moscow's attitude toward Italy hardened while its attitude toward Britain softened at the beginning of September. Whereas Soviet newspapers into August had stressed the "interested motives" of British opposition to war in East Africa, the *Journal de Moscou* also emphasized the need to assert League principles even toward a conflict "on a secondary front in world politics," because "warmongers in Europe" were counting on "the certainty that no collective action whatever" could foil their plans.(70) A couple of weeks later, *Pravda* added: "Whatever may be the reasons behind the British action it is clear that England is following the line of reinforcement of the interests of peace and of strengthening the authority of the League of Nations."(71)

Playing for higher stakes than it wished, Moscow had its hand called at Geneva: the Soviets condemned Italian aggression--with reservations. In a speech to the League Council's September 5 meeting, Litvinov clearly enunciated Soviet concerns: Moscow valued Italy's friendship and wished to keep it if possible; the Italo-Ethiopian dispute in itself did not threaten or even concern the USSR except that it portended future threats to peace. Italy was a vital component in collective security; nonetheless, it was that very system which was now at stake.(72)

Displeased, the Italians called Litvinov's speech "a grave blow" to mutual friendship.(73) Yet some recognized the ambivalence in the Kremlin's position. Pietro Arone, the newly-arrived ambassador to Moscow,(74) on September 9 spoke with the deputy foreign commissar, who played down the League's ability to do anything effective and emphasized that suspicions of Britain united Russia and Italy.(75) In his September 12 telegram to the foreign commissariat, Litvinov reiterated the core of his speech: "the resolute application of sanctions by the League against Italy will be a stern warning to Germany as well."(76)

On September 14, Litvinov again spoke to the League with "all the restraint" the situation demanded.(77) He complained:

*If we had before us from Italy, instead of a declaration on liberty of action, a formal and well-founded complaint against acts of aggression committed by a neighboring Ethiopia . . . I venture to assure the representative of Italy that not only would he have obtained from the League full justice, but also convinced himself of the amount of the sympathy to which the noble Italian nation is entitled.*(78)

In other words, if Italy had but presented its case differently, then both the League and Moscow would have accepted Rome's claims.

Litvinov stressed not only an abstract Soviet admiration for the League as an instrument to stalemate aggressive states, but also the Kremlin's efforts to make it a workable and effective device. But, again, most impressive about his statement was its mildness, its desire to put off the day when the Soviets would have to condemn directly, and on its own terms, Italian aggression in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian conflict merely threatened the League's ability to deal with aggression elsewhere, and for that reason alone was it worth the energies of the League's representatives. Arone understood and reported on September 19 that the USSR wanted to maintain the status quo in Europe and that the Kremlin feared Italy might support Germany against the USSR. Thus, he explained, Moscow's moderate tone on the Ethiopian situation--even at this late date.(79)

Italy attacked Ethiopia on October 2. Once the League Council applied sanctions against Italy, the Soviet Union joined the other powers.(80) The Council of People's Commissars on October 17 banned the export of war material to Italy.(81) Interestingly, even as the League of Nations with Soviet support worked to thwart Italy's ambitions in Ethiopia, Moscow applied to Ansaldo of Genoa to purchase 75/17 mm cannon. Mussolini's government granted permission for the transaction.(82)



A mere half-a-year later, in April 1936, the League Council met under the dark shadow of Ethiopia's impending collapse. On the 24th, it was reported that the Soviets were disposed to drop sanctions against Italy, if given absolute assurance that effective measures would be applied against any future aggressor.(83)

In May 1936 the Soviets offered to remove their sanctions, if Italy would join a tripartite accord with themselves and Paris.(84) During July rumors abounded that Mussolini had seriously studied the idea but had rejected it in the end.(85) Meanwhile, the League abandoned sanctions.(86) The onset of the Spanish Civil War in July 1936 dashed efforts at reconciliation.(87) Soviet appeasement had failed.

Certainly, the Kremlin's policy gyrations won few friends among the world's blacks. For example, the American journal, *The Black Man*, in the early summer of 1936 commented,

*Primarily, there is no difference between capitalistic white men and communistic white men in the determination of racial interest. It is true that the communistic whites pretend a kind of sympathy for and fellowship with the Negro, but that is only a means to an end. . . . The Negro will always suffer from the prejudice of the dominant whites, whether they are capitalistic or communistic. (. . .) Russia treats the few Negroes there to-day with consideration only because there is no danger from black domination.*(88)

*Castigating the League and communism, James S. McIntyre wrote in the next issue of The Black Man:*

*Geneva has now drawn the curtain heavily and ruthlessly on the black country of Abyssinia, and white civilization with all its past astuteness and cunning diplomacy, has now shamelessly demonstrated in the open that its only concern for the coloured peoples of the world is their exploitation and domination. (. . .) Communism, as a matter of political convenience, makes a gesture, and embraces the Negro in its doctrine of equality for all peoples, but the attitude of Soviet Russia at Geneva, of simply falling in line with the dictates of Imperialism and M. Litvinoff's apologetic speech at the outcome of events, afford the Negro another outstanding lesson in white tomfoolery. . . .*

He added that there was hope: "Let him [the Negro] pick a page from the book of Japan with its united and phenomenally progressive people--an answer to an impudent and degenerate western civilization. . . ."(89)

An ill-founded hope. Seeing an Italy determined to attack and a Britain determined to stand firm, Tokyo insisted that it wished to continue commercial relations with Ethiopia even after an Italian victory. The Japanese resisted imposing League sanctions and worked hard to reassure Rome that their interests in Ethiopia were strictly commercial. In return, the Italians promised to protect those interests. Without second thoughts, in 1936 Japan recognized Italy's empire created by the conquest of Ethiopia.(90) The rapprochement, begun after the Sugimura affair, quickly culminated in the Anti-Comintern Pact which by 1937 had united Italy and Japan with Germany and helped pave the way to World War II.

During that war, the famous Italian philosopher and fascist supporter, Giovanni Gentile, called for racial solidarity among Italians, Germans, and Japanese "to save Europe from the double threat of stateless communists and false democrats, Hebrew or not."(91) His plea graphically reveals the cynical banality of the racial politics played during the Italo-Ethiopian War and so flippantly reversed with the Anti-Comintern Pact.

## ENDNOTES

1. See, e.g., Emile Burns, *Ethiopia and Italy* (New York, c. 1935), 135-37. Research for this paper was, in part, made possible by a Residential Fellowship provided by the Kennan Institute of the Wilson Center for Advanced Scholarly Research and by a research grant provided by Jacksonville

University.

2. See, e.g., Carlo Zaghi, *I russi in Etiopia*, 2 vols. (Naples, 1972) and Harold G. Marcus, *The Modern History of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: A Select and Annotated Bibliography* (Stanford, CA, 1970).

3. For the battle and the events leading up to it, see Carlo Conti Rossini, *La battaglia di Adua* (Rome, 1939); *Italia e Etiopia del trattato di Ucciali alla battaglia di Adua* (Rome, 1935); and William Leonard Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1951), 259-84.

4. Edward Thomas Wilson, *Russia and Black Africa Before World War II* (New York, 1974), 57-58; Zaghi, *I russi*, 2: 55-110, 179-236.

5. Wilson, *Russia*, 84.

6. Blacks the world over rallied to Ethiopia's cause. *New York Times*, Feb. 16, June 27, July 8, 14, 15, 16, 18, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 31, Aug. 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 18, 21, 23, 25, Sept. 1, 11, 22, Oct. 4, 5, 6, 1935; *The Times* (London), July 26, 30, Aug. 8, 13, 26, 1935; *Moscow Daily News*, July 22, 1935; *The Standard*, Oct. 10, 1935: Record Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tokyo, Japan, [hereafter cited as Record Office (Tokyo)] A461 ET/11 vol. 4; Jordan to Arita, 11/18/36: *ibid.*, A461 ET/11, vol. 8; Jordan to Tokyo, 5/12/36: *ibid.*, A461 ET/11-2, vol. 2. I would like to thank Mariko Clarke for guiding me through the archives in Tokyo and for translating the pertinent Japanese documents.

On black attitudes toward the war, there is an increasing secondary literature, see, e.g., the work of William Randolph Scott, "Malaku Bayen: Ethiopian Emissary to Black America, 1936-1941," *Ethiopia Observer* 15 (1972) and *The Sons of Sheba's Race: African-Americans and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1941* (Bloomington, 1993). See as well S. K. B. Asante's work, *Pan-African Protest: West Africa and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1934-1941* (London, 1977); "The Catholic Missions: British West African Nationalists, and the Italian Invasion of Ethiopia, 1935-36," *African Affairs* 73 (Apr. 1974): 204-16; and "The Italo-Ethiopian Conflict: A Case Study in British West African Response to Crisis Diplomacy in the 1930s," *Journal of African History* 15 (1974): 291-302. Finally, see Joseph E. Harris, *African-American Reactions to War in Ethiopia, 1936-1941* (Baton Rouge, 1994) and Rodney A. Ross, "Black Americans and Haiti, Liberia, the Virgin Islands and Ethiopia, 1929-1936," (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 1975). See Roi Ottley, *New World A-Coming* (New York: Literary Classics, Inc., 1943), 327-42, for Japan's influence on African-Americans prior to World War II.

7. For example, in August 1930 the Congress of the Profintern then sitting in Moscow formed a new "International Negro Committee" for intensifying the Profintern's work among the black masses of Africa and America. Praising communist work "even in the most remote districts," the Congress attached great importance to rousing blacks for class warfare against "the chauvinism of Whites." *The Times* (London), Aug. 20, 27, 1930.

8. *Pravda*, Dec. 16, 1934; *Izvestia*, Mar. 29, Aug. 17, Nov. 20, Dec. 10, 18, 1934, Feb. 14, Mar. 1, 1935; *Journal de Moscou*, Sept. 1, 1934, Jan. 5, 1935; *Moscow Daily News*, Feb. 14, 1935; *New York Times*, May 24, 1935; Attolico to Rome, 12/20/34, 2/16/35: Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Direzione Generale degli Affari Politici, URSS (Rome) [hereafter cited as MAE (Rome) AP URSS] b(usta) 15 f(oglio) 2. Using the theme of "imperialist contradictions," TASS had reported that Japanese economic expansion in Ethiopia and dumping in Austria and Hungary particularly upset Rome. Berardis to Rome, 10/31/33: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b11 f1. For similar comments, see Milene Charles, *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Involvement*, ed. and trans. Jo Fisher (Boston, 1980), 37.

9. *Moscow Daily News*, Jan. 11, 1935.

10. Hostilities in Manchuria after 1931 already had spurred the Kremlin to warn the Comintern that Japan's attack represented the first step in an invasion of the Soviet Union. Wilson, *Russia*, 254. Also see A. J. Barker, *The Civilizing Mission: A History of the Italo-Ethiopian War of 1935-1936* (New York, 1968), 72. For an overview of Japanese-Ethiopian relations, see the work of Tetsushi Furukawa: "Japan's Political Relations with Ethiopia, 1920s-1960s: A Historical Overview," unpublished paper presented to the 35th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, Seattle, WA, Nov. 20-23, 1992; "Japanese-Ethiopian Relations in the 1920-30s: The Rise and Fall of "Sentimental" Relations," unpublished paper presented to the 34th Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association, St. Louis, MO; and "Japanese Political and Economic Interests In Africa: The Prewar Period," *Network Africa* 7

(1991), 6-8. See also, Richard Bradshaw, "Japan and European Colonialism in Africa 1800-1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio University, 1992), 291-362.

11. George Padmore, "Ethiopia Today: The Making of a Modern State," in Nancy Cunard, ed., *Negro: An Anthology*, ed. and intro. Hugh Ford (New York, 1934, 1970), 386.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 391. Also see *Journal de Genève*, Jan. 9, 1934: Record Office (Tokyo) E424 1-3-1; William Koren Jr., "Imperialist Rivalries in Ethiopia," *Foreign Policy Reports* 11 (Sept. 11, 1935): 176; "Abyssinia for the Italians," *Business Week* (Feb. 23, 1935): 24; Reveka Abramovna Averbukh, *Italiia v pervoi i votoroi mirovykh voynakh* (Moscow, 1946), 74; Petr Alekseevich Lisovskii, *Voina v Afrike* (Moscow, 1935), 16-19; and *The Times* (London), Jan. 16, Aug. 22, 1930.

Italy and Russia were not alone in worrying about Japan's penetration of Ethiopia. The Anti-Opium Information Bureau of Geneva asserted that the Japanese had learned how to use opium supplied by their drug monopolies as a political tool in Formosa, Chosen, and Manchukuo. The Bureau worried that with the 1,600,000 acres of fertile land granted by a 1932 agreement for cotton growing, Ethiopia also had granted Japan the sole right to cultivate opium poppies. "Africa Beware!": Record Office (Tokyo) E424 1-3-1.

14. Mario dei Gaslini, "Il Giappone nell'economia Etiopica," in *Federazione Provinciale Fascista Milanese, Corso di Preparazione politica per i giovani, Riassunti delle lezioni tenute nel secondo trimestre* (Milan: 1935), 99-107 explained Italy's upset at Japan's attempt to dominate the Ethiopian market.

15. *New York Times*, Feb. 18, Sept. 9, 1934; July 11, 1935; Barker, *Civilizing Mission*, 11; Kurosawa to Hirota, 1/24/36: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/11, vol. 6; *Cape Times*, Jan. 4, 1935: *ibid.*, E424 1-3-1.

16. Adol Mar to Hanew, 3/4/34: Record Office (Tokyo) M130 1-1-2.

17. Tokyo to Blatin Geta Helouí, 9/4/33; Note to Kitagawa, 9/28/33: *ibid.*, E424 1-3-1.

18. Sugimura to Hirota, 8/16/35, 8/19/35: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/11, vol. 2; *New York Times*, Jan. 20, 28, Sept. 10, 1934; *The Times* (London), Jan. 29, 1934.

19. *New York Times*, Sept. 9, 10, Dec. 27, 1934.

20. *Ibid.*, Dec. 2, 1934.

21. *Ibid.*

22. J. Calvitt Clarke III, *Russia and Italy Against Hitler: The Bolshevik-Fascist Rapprochement of the 1930s* (Westport, CT, 1991), 99-162; Stefani to Rome, 9/3/33, 9/4/33; Attolico to Rome, 9/4/33, 9/12/33: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b10 f1; Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, *Ministerstvo inostrannykh del SSSR, Dokumenty vneshniaia politika SSSR* [hereafter cited as DVP] (Moscow, 1971), 17: no. 196; *Izvestia*, Sept. 3, 5, 1933; *Pravda*, Sept. 3, 1933; *The Times* (London), Sept. 15, Nov. 3, 1933; *Moscow Daily News*, Feb. 11, 1935; *Journal de Moscou*, Sept. 15, 1934, June 22, 1935; Max Beloff, *The Foreign Policy of Soviet Russia*, 2 vols. (London, 1947-49), 1: 99, 102, 200. See also William E. Dodd, *Ambassador Dodd's Diary, 1933-1939*, ed. William E. Dodd, Jr. and Martha Dodd (New York, 1941), 258, July 12, 1935.

23. Suvich memorandum, 10/27/33; Suvich circular, 11/2/33: *ibid.*, b8 f4.

24. *British Documents of Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print* [hereafter cited as B DFA], ed. Kenneth Bourne and Donald Cameron Watt, Part II, *From the First to the Second World War, Series A, The Soviet Union, 1917-1939*, ed. Donald Cameron Watt, vol. 12, *The Soviet Union, Jan. 1934-June 1935*, (Frederick, MD, 1986), nos. 7, 18, 25; *Izvestia*, Jan. 1, 1934; and Donald G. Bishop, *The Roosevelt-Litvinov Agreements: The American View* (Syracuse, NY, 1965), 252 n.18, 273 n.42.

25. Memorandum, 12/2/33; MAE circular, 12/3/33: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b8 f4; Mussolini memorandum, 12/3/33: *ibid.*, b10 f1; DVP, 16: nos. 405, 419; *Izvestia*, Dec. 8, 1933; *The Times* (London), Jan. 29, 1934; "Business Abroad," *Business Week* (Dec. 16, 1933): 25. Italy's representatives in the USSR closely followed the increasing incidents threatening relations between Soviet Russia and Japan throughout 1933. See the many documents in MAE (Rome) AP URSS b10

f9.

26. Mario Sertoli, "Il pericolo giallo," *Critica Fascista* (Jan. 1, 1934): 12.

27. For example, see *Pravda*, Jan. 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 22, 27, Feb. 1, 23, Apr. 21, Aug. 13, 1934; *Izvestia*, Jan. 9, 18, 21, 22, June 27, 1934; *Moscow Daily News*, Jan. 16, 1934, Feb. 14, 1935; Attolico to Rome, 1/16/34, 1/25/34, 7/4/34, 8/16/34: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b15 f2; "Europe," *Business Week* (Apr. 28, 1934): 28.

28. Suvich, memorandum, 6/6/34: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b12 f2; Tamaro to Rome, 7/6/34; Rome to Attolico, 7/19/34: *ibid.*, b12 f3; Attolico to Rome, 6/7/34: *ibid.*, b13 f1; Attolico to Rome, 6/29/34, 7/12/34; Bastianini to Rome, 7/4/34: *ibid.*, b14 f1; Suvich memorandum, 5/16/35: *ibid.*, b16 f1; Attolico to Rome, 1/31/35, 2/17/35: *ibid.*, b16 f3; Buti to Suvich, 8/27/35; Attolico to Rome, 1/2/35, 1/9/35, 2/28/35, 5/11/35; Berardis to Rome, 6/18/35; Suvich to Undersecretary of Press and Propaganda, 5/26/35: *ibid.*, b17 f2; Attolico to Mussolini, 8/8/35: *ibid.*, b18 f4; Undersecretary of Press and Propaganda to MAE, 6/22/35: *ibid.*, b18 f12; Italy, Ministero degli Affari Esteri, I documenti diplomatici italiani [hereafter cited as DDI], (Rome, 1953- ), 8th (series), (vol.) 1: no. 710; DVP, 17: nos. 221, 417; 18: no. 3, n.3; *Izvestia*, May 12, 1934; *New York Times*, Mar. 10, 1935; *Pravda*, May 8, June 17, July 21, 1935.

29. Suvich memorandum, 5/16/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b16 f1. John Haslam, in *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933-39* (London, 1984), 61-62, in viewing this document argues that when faced with Suvich's criticisms of a press campaign on Ethiopia's behalf, Shtein, "being one of those Soviet diplomats confident to act independently," took it upon himself, "evidently without explicit authorisation," to deny that his government intended to get involved in the dispute. Haslam continues that the Soviet Union had a vested interest in forestalling any Italian adventure in East Africa, because it could only weaken Rome's capacity to act effectively against Germany. Shtein, therefore, had "unwittingly conveyed the illusion" that Moscow was indifferent. See Suvich memorandum, 5/16/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b16 f1.

This independence, during the purges, seems quite unlikely; therefore, to suggest that Moscow was not, in reality, "indifferent," seems equally unlikely. Surely, the Soviets just wanted the matter resolved quickly--whatever the solution--so that Italy could return its gaze to the Brenner. Also see Donald Imrich Buzinkai, "Soviet-League Relations, 1919-1939: A Survey and Analysis" (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1964), 166-73; Salvemini, *Prelude to World War II*, 183; and James Dugan and Laurence Lafore, *Days of Emperor and Clown: The Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-1936* (Garden City, NY, 1973), 161.

30. Other, even minor, Italian gestures into 1935 continued to encourage Moscow to be hopeful. See, e.g., DVP, 17: no. 29; *Moscow Daily News*, Feb. 26, Mar. 12, 1935; and *Journal de Moscou*, Oct. 27, 1934.

31. Tamaro to Rome, 7/6/34: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b12 f3; Attolico to Rome, 9/27/34: *ibid.*, b15 f2. See *Journal de Moscou*, Sept. 15, 1934.

32. Petr Alekseevich Lisovskii, *Italo-abissinskii konflikt* (Moscow, 1935), 22-30; V. I. Avershin, "Bor'ba SSSR z kollektivnuu bezopasnost' v dunaikom basseine i na Balkanakh (1933 g.-iiuni 1935)," in I. N. Chempalov, ed., *Balkany i Blizhnii Vostok v noveishee vremia* (Sverdlovsk, 1974), 18; Donald Cameron Watt, "The Secret Laval Mussolini Agreement of 1935," *The Middle East Journal* (Winter 1961): 69-78; William I. Shorrock, *From Ally to Enemy: The Enigma of Fascist Italy in French Diplomacy, 1920-1940* (Kent, OH, 1988), 99-116; Vilnius Sipols and Mikhail Kharlamov, *On the Eve of World War II, 1933-1939* (Moscow, 1974), 81; Nina Dmitrievna Smirnova, *Politika Italii na Balkanakh: Ocherk diplomaticheskoi istorii, 1922-1935 gg.* (Moscow, 1979), 277; Andrei Andreevich Gromyko, I. I. Zemskov, and V. A. Zorin, eds., *Istoriia diplomatiia*, 5 vols. (Moscow, 1959-74), 3: 618; Iosif Mikhailovich Lemin, *Ugroza voyny i mirnaia politika SSSR* (Moscow, 1935), 66; Sergei Danilovich Skazkin, K. P. Miziano, S. I. Dorofeev, eds., *Istoriia Italii*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1970-71), 3: 117; Vladimir Petrovich Potemkin, ed., *Istoriia diplomatii*, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1941-45), 3: 548; \*\*\*, "La Conferenza di Stresa ed i suoi sviluppi," *Rivista di studi politici internazionale* (Apr.-June 1935): 156-77; *Izvestia*, Dec. 18, 1934, Jan. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, Mar. 21, Apr. 4, 6, 7, 8, 14, 16, 1935; *Moscow Daily*



News, Jan. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, Feb. 11, Mar. 18, 22, Apr. 4, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 23, 1935; Pravda, Apr. 10, 14, 1935; Journal de Moscou, Apr. 13, 20, 27, 1935; New York Times, Feb. 12, 1935; DVP, 18: no. 214; DDI, 8th, 1: nos. 137, 239; Attolico to Rome, 4/28/35; Suvich memorandum, 5/16/35; MAE circular, 6/8/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b16 f1; Attolico to Rome, 4/4/35; Attolico to Rome, 4/11/35; Attolico to Rome, 4/18/35: *ibid.*, b18 f4; "Italy's Ambitions in Africa," The Natal Mercury, June 3, 1935; J. P. Cope, "Ethiopian Fear War," June 4, 1935: Record Office (Tokyo) E424 1-3-1.

Not everyone believes that the Kremlin held such sanguine views of the Rome and Stresa agreements. See Haslam, *Soviet Union*, 45-46, 48-49, 62-66 and Beloff, *Foreign Policy*, 1: 132. Also see DVP, 18: nos. 14, 16, 19, 166, and p. 614.

33. Gaetano Carlo Salvemini, *Prelude to World War II* (Garden City, NY, 1954), 183. See also Lisovskii, *Voina v Afrike*, 41 and DDI, 8th, 1: nos. 12, 159.

34. Attolico to Rome, 2/16/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b17 f2; Attolico to Rome, 3/21/35, 4/11/35: *ibid.*, b18 f4; Suvich memorandum, 1/24/35; Suvich circular, 1/28/35: *ibid.*, b16 f1.

35. Scott, Sons, 124.

36. "American Negroes and Communist Strategy," *Christian Century* 52 (June 12, 1935): 781; New York Times, May 23, 1935; Scott, Sons, 125.

37. Scott, Sons, 125.

38. *Ibid.*, 126.

39. "American Negroes," 781; Scott, 126.

40. Moscow Daily News, July 11, 1935.

41. George Padmore, "Ethiopia and World Politics," *Crisis* 42 (May 5, 1935): 138-39.

42. *Ibid.*, 139.

43. *Ibid.*

44. *Ibid.*, 157.

45. George Padmore, "Ethiopia and World Politics," *Crisis* 42 (May 5, 1935): 157.

46. *Ibid.*, 157. See Asante, *Pan-African Protest*, 44-45.

47. Suvich memorandum, 6/26/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b16 f1; DDI, 8th, 1: nos. 435, 440.

48. Moscow Daily News, Mar. 24, 30, 1935.

49. Cedric James Lowe and Frank Marzari, *Italian Foreign Policy, 1870-1940* (London, 1975), 259; Mario Roatta, *Il processo Roatta* (Rome, 1945), 30-31, 200-01; Franklin D. Laurens, *France and the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis, 1935-1936* (The Hague, 1967), 51-54; Shorrock, *From Ally to Enemy*, 117-40 *passim*.

50. Moscow Daily News, Apr. 10, 1935; The Times (London), Mar. 29, May 14, 1935; Attolico to Rome, 3/23/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b16 f5.

51. Quaroni circular, 7/29/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b16 f2; DDI, 8th, 1: no. 630. Aloisi to Mussolini, Note, Rome, July 27, 1935; Buzinkai, "Soviet-League Relations," 167, New York Times, July 19, 31, 1935; DBFP, 14: no. 413; See the editorial in Journal de Moscou, Aug. 9, 1935; The Times (London), Aug. 1, 1935; Salvemini, *Prelude*, 253.

52. Sugimura to Hirota, 7/27/35: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/I1, vol. 1.

53. Buti to Suvich, 3/22/34, 9/24/34, 10/4/34; Suvich Memorandum, 10/3/34: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b14 f1; Suvich memorandum, 2/5/35, 3/16/35: *ibid.*, b16 f1; Aloisi to Attolico, 6/5/35: *ibid.*, b16 f7; Aloisi to Attolico, 1/4/35; Attolico to Rome, 3/6/35, 3/14/35, 5/24/35; Dir. Gen. A. E. Uff. 3 to Dir. Gen. Affari Politici, 4/17/35: *ibid.*, b17 f2; Suvich memorandum, 3/29/35: *ibid.*, b16 f1; Consulate at Rotterdam to Rome, 3/22/35; Attolico to Rome, 4/17/35; Consul General at Odessa to Rome, 6/3/35; Consulate at Hamburg to Rome, 6/25/35: *ibid.*, b18 f8; BDFA, II, A, 13: nos. 1, 12, 31; The Times (London), Feb. 9, 1934, Aug. 15, 19, 1935; Izvestia, Jan. 2, June 17, 1935; DVP, 17: nos. 3, 82, 90, 109; 18: nos. 2, 82, n.2, n.44, n.43; Journal de Moscou, Jan. 5, Apr. 6, 1934.

54. Drawing upon this press report, in October, the NAACP charged that the USSR was aiding the fascist war effort. The Crisis denounced Soviet hypocrisy. See "Soviet Russia Aids Italy," *Crisis* 42 (Oct. 1935): 305. American Communist Party leaders denied any duplicity, pointing to worldwide



communist demonstrations against Italian aggression. In response to the bitter attacks, Browder reminded African-Americans that Russia and the communists were exerting "all energies to build a mass movement in defense of Ethiopia against a bestial fascist assault." See "Earl Browder Replies," *Crisis* 42 (Dec. 1935): 372. All this caused estrangement among the Party's black rank and file. See Mark Naison, *Communists in Harlem During the Depression* (Urbana, IL 1983): 173-84; *Daily Worker*, Sept. 6, 9, 1935; and Scott, *Sons*, 125-27.

55. *New York Times*, Aug. 27, Sept. 2, 6, 8, 10, 1935; *The Times* (London), Sept. 21, 1935. Palmiro Togliatti, *Opera*, ed. Ernesto Ragionieri, vol. 3, part 2, 1929-1935 (Rome, 1973), 762. See Giuliano Procacci, *Il socialismo internazionale e la guerra d'Etiopia* (Rome, 1978), 30, 34, 98-99; Consulate at Rotterdam to Rome, 3/22/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b18 f8; and Haslam, *Soviet Union*, 69-72.

56. *Chicago Daily News*, July 10, 1935: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/I1-2 vol. 1; "About Italy and the Ethiopian Issue," Sept. 1935: A461 ET/I1, vol. 1; *New York Times*, July 11, 13, 1935; *The Times* (London), July 20, 1935. See also Okamoto to Hirota, 8/26/35: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/I1, vol. 2 and DDI, 8th, 1: no. 338.

57. *New York Times*, July 11, 1935.

58. Fujita to Hirota, 7/30/35 (Record Office, Tokyo): A461 ET/I1-2 vol. 1.

59. DDI, 8th, 1: nos. 555, 569, 570, 571, 587; *Moscow Daily News*, July 21, 24, 1935; *New York Times*, July 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 1935; *The Times* (London), July 20, 23, 25, 1935; *Chicago Daily News*, July 22, 1935: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/I1-2 vol. 1; Sugimura to Hirota, 7/27/35: *ibid.*, A461 ET/I1, vol. 1; Kitada to Hirota, 8/21/35: *ibid.*, A461 ET/I1 vol. 2; Masanori Taura, "I. E. Funso to Nihon gawa Taio: Showa 10 nen Sugimura Seimei Jiken wo Chushin ni," *Nihon Rekishi* 526 (Mar. 1992): 79-83; Masanori Taura, "Nichi I Kankei (1935-36) to sono Yotai: Echiopia Senso wo meguru Nihon gawa Taio kara," in Takashi Ito, ed., *Nihon kindai-shi no sai kochiku* (Tokyo, 1993), 305-06.

60. Sakuma to Hirota, Aug. 23, 1935: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/I1-2 vol. 1.

61. *New York Times*, July 27, Aug. 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 29, 30, Sept. 2, 14, 19, 20, 22, 1935; *The Times* (London), Feb. 28, July 29, Aug. 7, 9, 10, Sept. 20, 23, 1935; *Moscow Daily News*, Sept. 20, 1935; Angelo Del Boca, *La guerra d'Abissinia* (Milan, 1965), 28; Sugimura to Hirota, 8/19/35; Satou to Hirota, 8/31/35: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/I1 vol. 2. "Abyssinia and Italy," Aug. 1935: *ibid.*, A461 ET/I1. vol. 3; "Ethiopia and European War," *The Military Engineer* (Sept.-Oct. 1935): 356; *New York Sun*, Sept. 18, 1935: *ibid.*, A461 ET/I1-2 vol. 1.

62. *Japan Times*, July 26, 1935.

63. *Ibid.*, Aug. 8, 1935.

64. *New York Times*, Aug. 23, 25, 1935.

65. *Ibid.*, Aug. 24, 25, 30, Sept. 1, 1935.

66. DDI, 8th, 1: no. 710.

67. MAE circular, 8/28/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b16 f2; *New York Times*, Aug. 31, Sept. 2, 1935; *Izvestia*, Aug. 30, 1935.

68. Lisovskii, *Voina v Afrike*, 34; Lowe and Marzari, *Italian Policy*, 275; Shorrock, *From Ally to Enemy*, 123, 127; DDI, 8th, 1: nos. 134, 135, 392, 401, 429, 431, 432, 449, 465, 539, 566; 2: nos. 17, 31, 33, 44.

69. DDI, 8th, 1: nos. 541, 547, 548, 553, 597, 629, 684; BDFA, II, A, 14: no. 413.

70. *Journal de Moscou*, Aug. 23, 1935.

71. *New York Times*, Sept. 12, 1935.

72. Most have misinterpreted this speech. On the surface, violently anti-Italian, in context it was in truth a plea for continued cooperation with Rome. See Arthur Upham Pope, Maxim Litvinoff (New York, 1943), 361-62; DVP, 18: no. 357; *Moscow Daily News*, Sept. 6, 1935; Sipols, *Sovetskii Soiuz, bor'ba za mir*, 100; "Litvinov at Geneva," *New World Review* 4 (Jan. 1936): 7; *Izvestia*, June 9, 1935; *Journal de Moscou*, Sept. 6, 1935; *New York Times*, Sept. 6, 1935; and DDI, 8th, 2: nos. 55, 59, 80.

73. Mussolini to Aloisi, 9/6/35; Suvich to Arone, 9/12/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b17 f2.

74. Buti to Suvich, 7/1/35; Arone to Rome, 8/31/35; Arone to Rome, 9/8/35: *ibid.*, b17 f2.

75. MAE circular, 9/12/35: *ibid.*, b17 f2.
76. Sipols, *On the Eve*, 82.
77. *Izvestia*, Sept. 15, 1935; see also *Pravda's* editorial, Sept. 15, 1935.
78. DVP, 18: no. 362; *Moscow Daily News*, Sept. 15, 1935; Haslam, *Soviet Union*, 67; Salvemini, *Prelude*, 253-54, 315; "The Soviet Union and Ethiopia," *New World Review* 4 (Sept. 1935): 6; *New York Times*, Sept. 16, 1935.
79. Arone to Rome, 9/19/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b17 f5.
80. DVP, 18: nos. 372, 373; *Pravda*, Oct. 5, 1935; Haslam, *Soviet Union*, 70-71.
81. Vilnus Sipols, *Vneshnaia politika Sovetskogo Soiuza 1933-1939 gg.* (Moscow, 1980), 370.
82. Ansaldo to MAE, 9/13/35; Suvich to Ministero della Guerra, 9/24/35; Suvich to Ansaldo, 9/26/35; Ansaldo to MAE, 10/4/35; MAE to Ansaldo, 10/10/35: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b18 f1. For an evaluation of Soviet trade with Italy during sanctions, see Lowell Ray Tillett, "The Soviet Role in League Sanctions Against Italy, 1935-36," *The American Slavic and East European Review* 15 (Feb. 1956): 11-16.
83. Beloff, *Foreign Policy*, 1: 203.
84. Cerruti to Rome, 5/22/36: MAE (Rome) AP URSS b19 f1.
85. Vitetti to Rome, 7/18/36: *ibid.*, b21 f5.
86. M. J. Bonn, "How Sanctions Failed," *Foreign Affairs* (Jan. 1937): 350-61.
87. Beloff, *Foreign Policy*, 2: 106.
88. "Communism and the Negro," *The Blackman* (May-June 1936): 2-3 in Marcus Garvey, *The Blackman: A Monthly Magazine of Negro Thought and Opinion*, Robert A. Hiss, comp. (Millwood, NY: Kraus-Thomson Organization, Ltd., 1975). Marcus Garvey echoed these sentiments, insisting that blacks should not depend on Communism. Communist behavior, he said, demonstrates that blacks would not fare better under communist rule than under democratic. The working classes seek communism to improve their economic conditions. "Their economic status with which they are dissatisfied is enjoyed at the expense of the oppressed and suppressed darker and black races. . . ." This would not change under communism. "The Future," *ibid.* (July-Aug. 1936): 8-9.
89. McIntyre, James S. "Abyssinia and After," *The Blackman* (July-Aug. 1936), 6-7, in *ibid.*
90. DDI, 8th, 1: no. 820. When the Japanese foreign ministry denied that Japan had sent arms to Ethiopia, *Messaggero* praised the Japanese attitude. Sugimura to Hirota, 9/16/35, 8/31/35: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/I1 vol. 2. Sugimura reported that Italy's press was saying that Japan's press was covering the Italian position objectively. The *Giornale d'Italia* on Aug. 27, 1935 argued that Italy and Japan were not going to come into conflict with one another but would cooperate, because the two countries shared the same policy and fate. Italy, reassured the paper, wanted only to secure the safety of its workers and to trade there; Italy did not seek to monopolize profits in Ethiopia by closing the economic door or by using the racial issue. See the many documents in Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/I1-4; A461 ET/I1 vol. 5; and M130 1-1-2, including *Giornale d'Italia*, Dec. 3, 1936; *Il Piccolo*, Dec. 3, 1936; *La Tribuna*, Dec. 3, 1936; *Il Popolo d'Italia*, Dec. 3, 1936; Sato to Hirota, 8/31/35: Record Office (Tokyo) A461 ET/I1 vol. 2; Invoices of Mishima & Co., Ltd.: *ibid.*, 461 ET/I1-3; DDI, 8th, 1: no. 113.
91. Giovanni Gentile, "Giappone Guerriero," *Civiltà Cattolica* (Jan. 21, 1942): 12. One of Italy's leading naval officers, Admiral Gino Ducci, similarly urged Japan to enter the war against USSR, and Roberto Farinacci prodded Spain to do likewise: "All of Europe is on its feet against Anglo-Saxon and Soviet Judaism. It would be absurd for the Spain of Franco to remain absent in the hour when her enemies are being crushed in the grip of inexorable justice." *New York Times*, June 27, 1941. Praising the morality of the war against bolshevism, Spain already had promised to send volunteers to fight, but was still unprepared to fully join the war. DDI, 9th, 7: no. 301.

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